

We are pleased to inform you that the U.S. nomination of critical methyl bromide uses for exemption from the 2005 phaseout has been submitted to the Ozone Secretariat of the Parties of the Montreal Protocol. The Ozone Secretariat will now forward the nomination package to the Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee (MBTOC), an advisory group that provides technical information on methyl bromide to the Parties. MBTOC will review the nomination requests received and make recommendations to the Parties. In November 2003, the Parties to the Protocol will meet and review the MBTOC recommendations for the continued production and import of methyl bromide after 2005 to meet authorized critical needs.

The U.S. government has prepared a sector based nomination of critical use exemptions (CUE). Individual and consortia applications were reviewed individually and then grouped together by "sector" to allow for an evaluation of the entire use. For example, the U.S. received 9 applications for the use of methyl bromide for forest seedlings from 9 different consortia. All 9 were reviewed individually and then brought together as a group for purposes of preparing a U.S. nomination for some use of methyl bromide for the "Forest Seedlings" sector. What the U.S. is seeking, in this example, is approval by the Parties for the use of methyl bromide in forest tree seedling production for those circumstances that, we believe, have no technically and economically feasible alternatives. It is important to note that inclusion in the nomination and even approval of the U.S. request does not convey a property right to a specified amount of methyl bromide but rather enables the U.S. to continue to use the fumigant after 2005 for those uses authorized by the Parties.

The U.S. is asking the Parties for a single overall amount of methyl bromide needed of all U.S. uses based upon the information provided in applications as well as other supplementary data and information. The U.S. has approached the nomination in this manner because we recognize the inherent variability associated with pest control in agricultural and other settings. The EPA will be scheduling stakeholder meetings sometime later this year to discuss the specifics on the regulatory mechanism for allocation of amounts that are approved by the Parties for critical use exemptions.

Uses were included in the nomination based on the results of a joint EPA/USDA technical review process. The thorough and comprehensive review entailed multiple levels of analysis with no fewer than two reviews conducted by a team of at least one biologist and one economist. In addition, the recommendations of these reviews were presented to a group of 45 PhD experts who evaluated whether or not there was a critical need for methyl bromide, based on the criteria laid out by the Parties. Subsequent to the determination of whether there was a critical need for *some* use of methyl bromide for a particular sector, the U.S. estimated the amount of methyl bromide that could be considered critically needed for the sector.

The inter-agency review resulted in a decision to nominate the following sectors for at least a portion of their original request for a critical use exemption. They are: food processing; commodity storage; forest seedlings; orchard seedlings; orchard replant; turf and sod; tomatoes; pepper; eggplant; strawberry; strawberry nursery; cucurbits; ornamentals; ginger; transplant trays

in certain greenhouse production systems and; sweet potatoes. The U.S. estimated the amount of methyl bromide that could be considered critically needed in each sector by evaluation of such factors as needed application rates, acres to be treated, pest pressures, and, the extent to which the use of technically feasible alternatives are somehow limited by regulation.

We will keep you informed as we move forward with this process. For more information on the nomination process, we include a list of relevant contacts. For Press Inquiries: David Deegan (202)564-7839; for Technical Questions on a Sector Nomination: Bill Chism (703) 308-8136 or David Widawsky (703) 308-8150.